

# Las Vegas, Jersey style

## Free lunches, dollars pack little old ladies in casinos

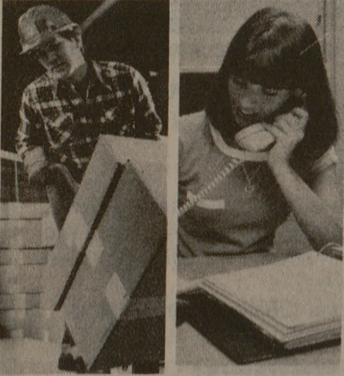
United Press International  
ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — There are so many little old ladies at the casinos you'd think bingo — not craps — was the attraction.

"I'll bet \$5," announced a suburban-looking matron as she and a companion emerged from their charter bus, complementary lunch ticket, free Susan B. Anthony dollars and salt water taffy in hand. "If I win, I'll stretch it to \$10."

"I once saw a man put down a \$10 bill — and it was gone just like that," said her more sophisticated friend.

"Oh my — well that's not really very wise," said the first woman, stunned into silent contemplation.

Bus 32693 was playing it cool, being, after all, New Yorkers who had never met each other until they plunked down \$15 each for the trip, taffy, buffet and three silver dollars.



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"You want to have fun, go to a movie," said Leo, who wore a green checked suit and an American flag on his lapel. "This is serious business."

"Roulette wheel here I come," yelled his girlfriend, Gerri, breaking the mood.

Last year 12,000 charter buses rolled up to Atlantic City's three shiny new casinos, giving the East Coast's clubwomen, retired elderly, pennywise vacationers and a smattering of hopeful unemployed their crack at the only legal slot machines and roulette wheels east of Las Vegas.

On 32693, Pete, who is young and dreamy and unemployed, fingered his \$50 stake and told his seatmate Martha, a retired bookkeeper, about his missed opportunities — lottery numbers that came in just one digit off, a friend who was hit by a bus and collected \$125,000.

"I could have been a bookkeeper," he commended. "I was good at that in school. I was so good I didn't even have to take the exam. I should have kept at that."

Phyllis, who visits the casinos often, warned her fellow passengers about the crush at the \$2 blackjack

tables. "You feel like you're drinking coffee at a Chock Full O' Nuts," she sniffed.

Inside the Boardwalk Regency, however, the real jam was not at blackjack but the fruitbowl at the free buffet.

"Just delicious, girls," called out a chunky matron in slacks and fur coat to dozens of similarly dressed women waiting in line for their turns.

"These ladies eat so much," wondered an elderly Hungarian doctor as he watched the crowd pile their plates with pseudobeef stroganoff. At the next table, two elderly women with crooked wigs and crooked lipstick carefully piled up surplus pats of butter.

"We hate to waste," said one as her sister nodded sagely.

The free buffet is an investment for the Boardwalk Regency, which knows that most of the people who are congratulating themselves on their great bargain at noon will have lost far more than its price by 5 p.m.

"Nothing is really free," says Gwen Groves, who handles the charter buses for the casino.

Indeed, by the time bus 32693 had been parked for 15 minutes, Martha

had lost \$40 and exited for "a long walk."

"It isn't bad today," said a man named Eddie at the craps table. "But I've been here on weekends, and you see them sitting in the lobby after an hour, all their money gone and just waiting for the buses to come back and get 'em."

Even the three Susan B. Anthony silver dollars which the Regency distributes to each of its charter bus guests are the product of an ulterior motive.

The average charter bus customer is a slot machine freak, frightened by the more complex machinations at blackjack and roulette. "But the bus people won't play the dollar machines," said Groves. The "Susie Bs" are an attempt to wean them from the lines in front of the nickel machines, and on to more serious gambling.

Groves, however, has her doubts about the free candy. "It's a fallacy to give a bunch of senior citizens salt water taffy," she mused. "Think of the flying dentures."

It is still possible for a charter bus refugee to while away the hours sightseeing along the Boardwalk, although the general impression,

these days, is that anyone standing too long in one place would be moved to make way for another casino.

"Everything must go," announce all the fudge stands and salt water taffy booths and tacky souvenir stores where "Squirt 'em Toilets" and cedarwood copies of the Lord's Prayer have been marked down to prepare for the blackjack tables and roulette wheels of the future.

Back at the casino, the Hungarian doctor had invested enough in the

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blackjack table to compensate the Boardwalk Regent for all of bus 32693's buffets, taffy and silver dollars.

When the bus retrieved its riders at six o'clock, it appeared that 32693

Butcher, said he became interested after talking to his American cousins who use CBs to help round up cattle.

"Since May (when the Conservative Party came to power) there's been a more positive attitude from the Home Office," Butcher said.

But he said the government fears a new bureaucracy may be needed to regulate CB use, and it is hamstringing by the need to cut government spending.

Bryan said his organization has the financial backing to set itself up as an independent administrative body.

British CB advocates cite standard arguments about CB's ability to help save lives in road accidents and natural disasters. Bryan offered a more chilling reason for its adoption.

"With the events going on in Afghanistan and the present world climate as unsettled as it is, CB

would have great benefits for defense purposes in case a confrontation occurs," he said.

Some 99 percent of Britlingo is borrowed from American users, Bryan said, although don the police are called "scuffers."

Bryan's organization has a national demonstration for London's Trafalgar Square, more than 10,000 CB enthusiasts will attend. But he said he would see the government make the unnecessary by legalizing CB.

Bryan said there was a "70 percent chance" of getting off the year. If that happens, he anywhere from 4 million to 5 Britons could wind up cluttered away on CB radios.

# CB craze big, illegal in U.K.

United Press International  
LONDON — Use a citizen's band from the U.S., are smuggled into Britain each week, even though the estimated 40,000 CB users in the United Kingdom are breaking the law.

"The basic reasons lie in the psychology of government in this country," says James Bryant, head of the Citizens' Band Association.

"We've got a permanent civil service that believes people should be

kept under control. Giving them two-way radio is not a way for them to keep people under their thumb."

With that kind of attitude it's no surprise that British CB jargon terms the Home Office, responsible in Britain both for radio waves and law enforcement, "the Meenies."

"The government has admitted that there are frequencies available for CB users," Bryant said. "Nothing has been done yet because there are hidden but influential bureaucrats who don't want to see CB legalized."

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# U.S. ready to mine harbors if necessary

United Press International  
WASHINGTON — America has 25 ships in the Arabian Sea and they stand ready to blockade the Persian Gulf or mine Iran's chief oil-loading port — if President Carter gives the word.

White House press secretary Jody Powell said last week the next steps Carter takes to punish Iran will not be along military lines, but officials have made a point of keeping the military option alive.

Defense officials said the United States already has deployed the materials it needs on ships in the Arabian Sea to blockade the Persian Gulf or mine a port.

But both Pentagon officials and

academic military experts are to note the dangers of such a move.

First, Iranian militants threatened to kill the 50 American hostages if such action is taken while the United States might be deterred by threats, it has no room for the captives.

Aside from that, both a blockade and mining the harbors would aim at preventing Iran from receiving goods or shipping oil.

That might cripple Tehran, also would mean American oil would not get the Iranian oil of now use. In Japan, for instance, oil comprises more than 60 percent of the imports.

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